

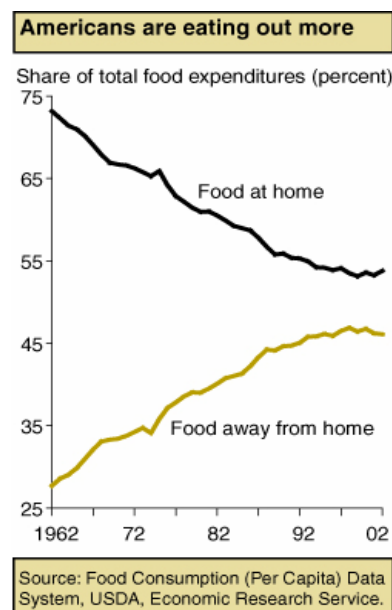
Nutrition Labeling at Fast-Food and Other Chain Restaurants

SANDWICHES	CALORIES	PRICE
HAMBURGER	280	.89
CHEESEBURGER	330	.99
FILET-O-FISH®	470	1.99
CRISPY CHICKEN	550	2.79
QUARTER POUNDER®	430	2.29
BIG N' TASTY®	540	2.29
BIG MAC®	590	2.39
CHICKEN McGRILL®	450	2.89
DOUBLE QUARTER POUNDER®	760	2.99

Federal, state or local governments should require fast-food and other chain restaurants with 10 or more units to list the calorie, saturated and trans fat (combined), sodium and carbohydrate contents of standard menu items on their menus. Restaurants that use menu boards, where space is limited, should be required to provide at least calorie information on their menu boards. Such information, clearly displayed at the point of decision, would allow Americans to exercise personal responsibility and make informed choices for a growing part of their diets.

Eating Out Is Associated with Obesity

- **Americans are increasingly relying on restaurants to feed themselves and their families.** In 1970, Americans spent just 26% of their food dollars on restaurant meals and other foods prepared outside their homes. Today, we spend almost half (46%) of our food dollars on away-from-home foods. American adults and children consume about one third of their calories from restaurants and other food-service establishments.
- Foods that people eat from restaurants are **generally higher in calories and saturated fat and lower in nutrients**, such as calcium and fiber, than home-prepared foods.
- Americans are eating more calories than two decades ago, which may be due in part to increases in eating out. **Studies link eating out with obesity and higher caloric intakes.** Children eat almost twice as many calories when they eat a meal at a restaurant (770 calories) compared to at home (420 calories).
- **The average American eats out four meals a week; that is enough to lead to over-consuming calories not just on the day the person eats out, but also to exceed calorie requirements over the course of a whole week.** One order of cheese fries with ranch dressing contains 3,010 calories, a large movie theater popcorn with “butter” topping has over 1,600 calories, and a café mocha and pastry from Starbuck’s provides over 1,000 calories.



People Need Nutrition Information to Make Informed Choices

- **It is not uncommon for a restaurant entree to provide half of a day’s recommended calories, saturated and trans fat, or sodium.** Include an appetizer, drink or dessert, and it is easy to consume a whole day’s calories, saturated and trans fat, or sodium in a single meal.

- **Without nutrition information, it is difficult to compare options and make informed decisions.** Few people would guess that a tuna sandwich from a typical deli has 50% more calories than a roast beef with mustard; that a small milkshake has more calories than a Big Mac; or that the BBQ ribs on the children's menu at a typical dinner house restaurant has fewer calories than the chicken tenders.
- **Half of the largest chain restaurants do not provide any nutrition information about their foods to their customers.** Those that do provide information usually do so in hard to use formats. Nutrition information on company websites requires that people have computers and access to the Internet before going out to eat. Information on tray liners or fast-food packages is not accessible to customers until after they order. Brochures and posters are often hard to find and provide overwhelming tables that are hard to read.

Nutrition Labeling Should be Extended to Include Chain Restaurants.

- Since 1994, the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA) has required food manufacturers to provide nutrition information on nearly all packaged foods. However, NLEA explicitly exempts restaurants. At most restaurants, people can only guess the nutritional quality of the food.

The National Academies' Institute of Medicine recommends that restaurant chains "provide calorie content and other key nutrition information on menus and packaging that is prominently visible at point of choice and use" (2006). The Food and Drug Administration, Surgeon General, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services also recommend providing nutrition information at restaurants.

- Three-quarters of adults report using labels on packaged food, and using labels is associated with eating more healthful diets. Studies also show that the provision of nutrition information at restaurants leads to lower calorie choices.
- People are used to having nutrition information on packaged food and also want it at restaurants. An industry-backed, nationally representative poll showed that 83 percent of Americans want restaurants to provide nutrition information, such as calories.
- A key benefit of mandatory nutrition labeling on packaged foods has been the reformulation of existing products and the introduction of new nutritionally improved products. For example, trans fat labeling on packaged food has lead many companies to reformulate their products to remove trans fat. In a similar fashion, nutrition labeling on menus and menu boards is likely to spur nutritional improvements in restaurant foods.

Who Would Guess...



... a large chocolate shake at McDonalds has 400 more calories than a whole meal of a hamburger, small fries, and a small Coke.

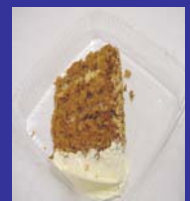


... depending on which drink you order at Starbucks you could end up with 160 calories in a grande Caffé Latte or 770 calories in a venti Strawberry and Crème Frappuccino.



...a Burger King Tendercrisp Chicken Sandwich (780 calories) has about the same number of calories as a Whopper (700 calories).

...one slice of carrot cake at the Cheesecake Factory has $\frac{3}{4}$ of a day's calories (1,560 calories).



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